

## **BANBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2010**

*2010 has been a very successful year with good audiences for all the lectures despite the poor weather at the beginning and end of the year. Numbers are up on last year in terms of attendees (averaging 60 for each talk) and the profile of the Society is kept firmly in the public eye by monthly announcements in the Banbury Guardian with details of forthcoming events. For the last two lectures of the autumn we served coffee in the Museum café afterwards to give members a chance to meet, discuss the subject or indeed to talk further to the lecturer. This innovation has been greeted with enthusiasm by members and will continue; we are grateful to the café for making it a relatively easy service to provide.*

Bad weather caused the cancellation of the first scheduled talk of the new year, to be given by Dr Helen Glew - 'Women workers in war and peace: the General Post Office 1914 – 1939' – but fortunately we were able to reschedule it for September when it was very well received. Mandy de Bellin gave the February talk on 'The Hunting transition: from deerhunting to foxhunting' which was followed in March by 'Cresswell Crags: inspiring visitors for 50,000 years' given by the director of the Cresswell Crags Museum and Visitor Centre, Ian Wall. In April a new venture was tried, holding an evening at which some of those involved with the Society's local history competition gave short presentations on their research and methodology. This resulted in a hugely enjoyable and variable evening with a capacity audience.

The summer expeditions included a very well conducted walk round Steeple Aston, guided by members of the Steeple Aston Village Archive, a visit to Mapledurham House and Mill and a tour of the wall paintings at Burton Dassett church, the site of the nearby deserted village and the Felden Archaeological Society's excavations nearby. This was led by Deborah Hayter who explained the topography of the area as well as the importance of the paintings. These trips, which tend to attract about a dozen members each time, are very much appreciated for the time and effort put in by those who organise them and make the necessary arrangements. They also serve as a social event, allowing members to get to know each other better. The AGM was held at Ditchley Park, attended by 29 members who were shown round the house subsequently.

The autumn started with the previously cancelled lecture by Helen Glew, after the customary drinks held for all members thanks to Fiona Thompson, who organised it as usual. It was followed in October by a talk by Mark Davies on Oxford's historic waterways and in November by an exceptionally well attended talk by Dr Jim McDermott who spoke about the Cartwright archive and the family at Aynho. Dr McDermott is in a particularly good position to